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ABSTRACT

The use of simulation in teaching international relations is examined by evaluating how a simulation approach helped students in three institutions of higher education understand international terror. The project involved 97 students from three colleges and universities, and people with expertise in the community including campus police, the F.B.I., the press, the state patrol, and the federal Department of State. Students were first exposed to international terror in history, social science, and journalism courses. They then participated in an international terror simulation at a two-day conference involving students from the three colleges and the community experts. Participants were directed to respond to incidents of international terror including (unbeknownst to them at the outset) release of six hostages selected from among the participants. Evaluations indicated that students found the simulation exciting and worthwhile and that they were better able to appreciate the complexities of international terror as a result of participating in the simulation. Findings also indicated, however, that students were generally incapable of converting initial surprise into an orderly approach for solving problems and that they did not make very good use of professional expertise. The conclusion is that students will be better able to identify and apply learning gained in simulations to real life situations if teachers provide them with more complete orientation toward the problem upon which the simulation is based. (DB)

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TEACHING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THROUGH SIMULATION: INTERCOLLEGIATE EXERCISE ON INTERNATIONAL TERROR

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Because certain complex global problems, such as international terror, clearly cannot be studied in the field, some instructors of international relations have turned with success to simulation as a teaching strategy. Since simulations are designed to create real-life situations, faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln decided to add two special elements of realism to a 1979 intercollegiate project on international terror: the use of practitioners and surprise. The project involved 97 students from three Nebraska schools and various practitioners including city and campus police, the F.B.I., the press, the State Patrol, and the Department of State. After studying international terror on their respective campuses (in history, political science, international relations, criminal justice and journalism courses), the students met in Lincoln with two purposes: to apply their academic learning about international terror to a life-like situation, and to expand their knowledge about the complexities of responding to incidents of international terror. Students and practitioners were required unexpectedly to attempt to negotiate the safe release of hostages (students from the classes which had been studying terror). The purposes of this paper are to suggest strategies for enhancing the cognitive and affective attributes of simulations dealing with issues in international affairs, to identify effective ways of utilizing practitioners in academic settings, and to suggest an approach toward inter-institutional cooperation.

Preparation and Objectives of Simulation:

The project was organized by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UN-L) faculty from the NDEA Title VI International Studies Center and faculty representatives from Wayne State College and Kearney State College. In a

series of workshops at Wayne State and UN-L beginning in April 1978,* participating faculty identified the objectives of this first attempt to pool institutional resources to enhance student understanding of a contemporary issue through use of simulation. First was the need for the topic of the simulation to be both timely and applicable to a wide variety of international settings. The simulation had to deal with a process within the international system as opposed to solely regional systems. Secondly, the topic had to link local concerns with the international setting--this linkage was seen as a way to foster realism within the simulation as well as to lead to more fruitful post-simulation learning activities. Thirdly, the topic of the simulation, and the simulation itself, had to be relevant to the objectives and content of a diverse number of courses on the three campuses. Eventually three types of formats were used in six classes in five fields. Specifically, the subject would be the major focus for a three-credit seminar at Wayne State; a one-hour mini-course at Kearney State: an interdisciplinary pro-seminar in international conflict at UN-L; a standard political science course in international relations; a history course on the 20th century; and a course in journalism dealing with the world press. The topic of the simulation had to be one benefiting from interdisciplinary exploration in which students could build their own hypotheses as well as test those in the literature presented in the support courses.

*Necessary ingredients for a successful inter-institutional arrangements appear to include involvement of the faculty at the beginning stages of the project and endorsement by appropriate administrative officials (heads, deans, etc.). In this project heads (or deans) were invited to participate in at least one workshop. On head and one dean did.

Once the topic was selected, participating schools benefited from the presence of Professor Stephen Sloan who was selected as consultant. Sloan, Professor of Political Science at the University of Oklahoma, has conducted simulations on terror for law enforcement agencies and airlines. He attended one workshop and the simulation, and provided suggestions and guidance on the simulation format, reading materials and other resources on terror, and the scenario.

The subject of international terror met these objectives and gave the organizers the opportunity to include various practitioners performing their traditional roles in the unfolding of the simulation. Invitations to participate actively in the simulation were extended to the Lincoln city policy force, the campus security force, the State Patrol,** the local press, the F.B.I.,** and the Department of State. With the exception of the Department of State's representative, participants selected for the exercise, while often having been trained to handle elements involving terrorism, had little or no experience in dealing with a terrorist attack which included the negotiation for the release of hostages. It should be pointed out here that the supervisory staff of these agencies were anxious for their members to gain this experience. Thus the simulation would bring about an interchange in problem recognition and solving by students and professionals.

The subject also lent itself well to the development of a surprise scenario involving all who would be attending the two day conference.

**Actually, representatives from both the F.B.I. and the State Patrol initiated contact with UN-L faculty after reading of the proposed simulation on terror in an interview which was published after Professor Sloan's first meeting with the faculty.

The former director of UN-L's Historical Theatre, Donald Winslow, was called upon to construct and lead the terrorist incident. Winslow is currently investigating Irish terrorist organizations on the East Coast. While those attending the simulation would be informed that they would be watching a theatrical presentation of terrorism on the second day of the meeting, Winslow was instructed to design a realistic intervention during the first day's session. This interruption would then be the basis for the unfolding of the real intent of the simulation. Winslow's group, the American Revolutionary Movement, represented a blend of several ideologically-motivated terrorist organizations and included evidence of potential cleavage among those recruited into the Movement. Biographical sketches on each of the terrorists were prepared as well as on the hostages who were to be taken from the student participants. To lend authenticity to the take-over, the terrorists were permitted to wear uniforms, carry unloaded weapons and use abusive language. Winslow instructed his team of eight actors "to behave as if they were real terrorists planning a real assault, under surveillance of a hostile security force and in a hostile environment." Negotiations with the terrorist group were to be undertaken with the assumption that the armed attack upon the meeting was not only comparable to terrorist tactics used elsewhere but that the reactions and responses of the students and practitioners would determine the outcome of the simulation. In brief, the simulation exercise itself would be directed by the participants on both sides once the attack had begun.

Additional preparation for the Lincoln meeting included the selection of classroom materials, video tapes, and films for the three

campuses.[1] The State Patrol brought its mobile communications unit (Blue Bird) to the UN-L campus for students to inspect, and the police provided copies of their training manuals. Before the conference, students and practitioners were divided into certain "response groups": law enforcement, journalists, mediation teams, State Department and international (corporate) management. Faculty were assigned to log the activities of each "response group." Students were led to believe that they would be working within this division when they met on the second day of the conference. Practitioners were assigned to roles in the "response groups" comarable to their real-life responsibilities. Finally, it was agreed that, if necessary, the simulation would last up to nine hours in order to maximize its explicit and inherent objectives.

Simulation:

Students were given a schedule which required them to meet on a Friday evening at 6:30 for an obligatory briefing. All participants were informed that their attendance on Friday evening would be necessary in order to participate in the Saturday session. After the credential check Friday, the phony schedule was abandoned and the incident of terror "scenario" was presented in the form of an actual takeover just at the moment the State Department representative finished his keynote address. As a Lincoln

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[1] These included the video tapes, "The Palestine Guerrilla" and "To Confront or Concede" (Quebec); the films, "The Battle of Algiers" and "Les Ordes" (Quebec); and lectures by Professor Richard Schultz on "Responses to Terrorism." Professor Sloan's tapes on simulation exercises in Oklahoma City and Portland were available for student viewing during the credentials check on Friday evening. Although some courses added to the preliminary reading lists, all students read the Spring/Summer 1978 issue of the Journal of International Affairs on International Terrorism. Following the simulation, students were also required to read Sloan's "Simulating Terrorism: From Operational Techniques to Questions of Policy," IS NOTES, (Winter 1978), 3-11.

reporter subsequently wrote, with a minimum of exaggeration:

> His face distorted by anger and a nylon stocking mask, the green-clad man screamed the instructions--'On the floor. Up against the wall.'
>
> Chairs overturned as more than 100 bodies scurried for the wall, faces down. . . . The revolutionaries had stormed the Centennial Room at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln student union.
>
> It was real, yet unreal. My mind reassured me--that this was just a game, that the guns the terrorists brandished were not loaded, that their raging hostility was only an act.
>
> But my body responded in fear. As the terrorists broke into the room I shaw them shove the speakers from the podium. Dr. Joan Wadlow was thrown to the floor. I saw blood.
>
> 'Lady, get your _____ head down or I'll blow it off.' Were they yelling at me? It didn't matter. My head went down. The giggling in the room stopped. . . . Like the real thing, the simulation was unexpected.[2]

After calling six students by name to be taken as hostages, the terrorists barricaded themselves in another part of the union.* The 91 participants were then required to remain in the conference area in which rooms had already been designated for the meetings of the "response groups" in the next day's phony schedule. Students and practitioners, working in their now activated response groups, were directed to attempt to secure the safe release of hostages by means of negotiations. Their specific instructions were left to a minimum but were judged adequate for them to proceed with their tasks. One student in the State Department response group was given a data bank on the terrorists with instructions to reveal its existence only when/if the participants pointed to the need for such information. In an effort to

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[2] Lincoln Star, April 9, 1979. Reporters had planned to bring portable telephones, typewriters and recorders on Saturday morning but none of them was prepared Friday night.

*Arrangements had been made in advance through extensive consultation with Student Affairs and Student Union personnel to block off all traffic on the second floor beginning at 8:00 p.m. Friday evening. Even so, one unsuspecting UN-L alumnus appeared on second floor after 8:00 p.m. and in fact was "frisked" by the terrorists until he convinced them he was an innocent bystander. This type of unexpected incident underscores the importance of making appropriate presimulation arrangements with various campus personnel, including the Student Affairs and Union personnel and the campus police.

maintain realism, most communications between the terrorists and the simulation participants were conducted by telephone.

The demands of the terrorists, obtained in fragments by various response groups throughout the evening, included: (1.) one million dollars for Third World aid to be provided by the international corporate management group; (2.) an apology from the U.S. State Department, over national television, for U.S. atrocities against the oppressed in the Third World; (3). conversion of the Governor's Mansion for use as a Civic Center for Lincoln's poor people; (4.) $100,000 for the beautification of Lincoln's "T" town (poor) neighborhood; (5.) immediate dismissal of all UN-L faculty of British nationality until the British government pulls out of Ulster; and (6.) a public apology from a high ranking University of Nebraska official for the University's complicity in swaying students to support the South African government. Although the negotiators did agree to provide all money requested and appeared to be willing to grant demands (5) and (6), neither they nor the other response groups counteracted with their own proposals. By 1:00 a.m. it appeared that after five hours (the terrorists appeared at 8:00 p.m.) the scenario had reached a stalemate with only one hostage still alive and the response groups in a state of feeble leadership. The simulation was halted at that point.

Faculty Assessment and Student Evaluations

In the faculty assessment four major points were made: 1. Although both students and practitioners had learned, from both their reading and the address given by the State Department representative that evening, of the desirability of creating inter-agency negotiating teams for such crises, the response groups made no effort to create such an organization or committee. There was a consistently high tendency for each response group to remain

isolated. 2. Indeed, as the scenario wore on, the response groups showed an overwhelming concern with the protection of their own domain, in both a physical and bureaucratic sense. Although some students complained of insufficient information for their roles, they nonetheless sought to preserve the response group's identity and perceived power within the conference group at large. 3. With few exceptions, practitioners were not called upon for resolving issues within their area of expertise, and while some students quickly discovered the data on the terrorists provided in advance to one member of the State Department response group, no one attempted to utilize other information on the terrorists which was selectively distributed during the course of the evening. The practitioners likewise did not undertake the exploration of possibilities that might have resulted in greater forms of inter-group cooperation. 4. Finally, as the most commonly expressed reactions of "boredom" and "fatigue" became pronounced after the second hour, neither the negotiating team nor the response groups appeared to be concerned about the fate of the hostages. There was no initial collection of information on the hostages, and there were no sustained inquiries about their fate. This led the terrorists to assume that a SWAT team or military attack was being readied by the negotiators. The publicizing of the "killing" of each hostage throughout the night failed to trigger new concern about saving the remaining hostages or prompt the groups to reconsider the methods of deliberations being used.

All four of these observations highlighted the participants' inability to invent a command structure and response mechanism not already outlined by the organizers of the simulation. The components of surprise and "non-predetermined" outcomes for the scenario may well have exaggerated this basic trait. However, we think this particular barrier in translating

hypotheses and prior training into new and workable functional structures within simulations might be much more in evidence than has yet been addressed by the literature. We assume, therefore, that simulation planners may be assuming a transference of cognitive and affective behavior by students and practitioners that may not be warranted.

Various methods and types of evaluation for the simulation as a whole were used at different times. The first took place at 1:00 a.m. immediately after the negotiations failed and the terrorists escaped. A 2½ hour debriefing was held the following day and others were held in classrooms several days later. An additional standard instrument was administered to all students to detect subsequent degrees of satifaction and disappointment, and the final examination in one course provided additional evaluative material.

In the first evaluation at 1:00 a.m., students were asked to write a short paragraph describing their reaction to the simulation experience. In the form of the question "How do you feel right now?", the evaluation provided interesting and useful anecdotal information. This writing experience was even more important as a focus for release of some of the emotional stress which resulted from the frustrations of the long negotiating process. In doing this assignment, students milled arround and seemed concerned with knowing which of their actions or proposed actions might have worked. One student wrote: "As the night progressed, I realized that tempers shorten, and the tensions rise--even in a simulation. I cannot imagine the tension of a real-life situation. Not being able to help someone in a life or death situation is such a hopeless feeling and that doesn't change when it's a simulation. The desire to be in control and not be able to achieve it is frustrating to say the least." Although refined classifications for this evaluation are not possible, it was apparent that an overwhelming majority

were seeking to explain why or how "poor planning" by their response group led to failure. As one student reported, "I sensed I don't know much about management-decision-making as a result of this exercise." And as one law enforcement official stated, "If the idea was to associate the students with mass confusion and problems relating to cooperation among all agencies involved in such problems, the program was certainly successful."

During the debriefing session, which included the observations of the hostages and terrorists as well as the other students and practitioners, Professor Sloan used an autobiographical format to elicit responses which could be united with actual terrorist incidents and scholarly assessments of terrorism as a generic process. In this way, the session completed the intention of the simulation with students translating their experiences into observations about terrorism in general. The students in the session wished that more time could be spent on this process--despite the fact that the discussion went uninterrupted for two and one-half hours. It was obvious in replaying the tape of this session that many were reconsidering their group's actions in reference to what they wished they had done. Agreeing in an almost unanimous voice that they had neglected the hostages--and were now bothered by that neglect--students stressed their sense of "powerlessness" even when they had actual or potential power within the exercise. Recognizing that they had failed as negotiators, a majority of those who spoke implied that they were given--by the element of surprise--too large and too full an enironment in which to respond: It appeared that many assumed that one would go through stages in the unveiling of "reality." Also in the debriefing session and in subsequent classroom discussions, students recognized that they had neither taken advantage of the presence of the practitioners nor undertaken any type of inventory of their relative positions within the scenario.

In one class, the political science course on international relations, students were asked to show "how the simulation exercise verified or refuted their academic studies." Their responses served as another valuable insight into the degree of student internationalization of the scenario. Two examples seem to convey the tenor of these reflections:

> The only way to prepare is to experience. I felt I was educated enough to be able to negotiate clearly and intelligently, but no--I was really wrong. People's lives were at stake but I don't feel that pressure because I lost orientation with them. There was rivalry between organizations over power--no one wanted to relinquish any tiny bit of power they might have. To me, the most significant fact to impress me was the psychological impact on everyone. The terrorists were scared, the hostages felt alienated, and the negotiators had created utter confusion.

> The articles. . . (and pre-simulation) lectures all provided me with a framework on how to go about being an international negotiator. This was the role I was assigned and this was the role I was ready to play at the simulation. The one point that seemed so pervasive throughout the reading and our discussions was that negotiators--more than anyone else--followed a set of rules and if these rules were followed the terrorist act would come to a conclusion with very satisfactory results. I honestly felt that if I approached the act and the terrorists with these rules ingrained in my mind there would be a successful outcome. Obviously either the readings and discussions misled me or I misled myself.

The assessment instrument administered at the end of the Saturday session provided for a quantification of student responses. Although the amount of self-reflection already noted stressed group and individual failures in responding to the scenario, students appeared to recognize the significance of discovering these failings--39 out of 58 students in the sample ranked the total experience to be extremely worthwhile. When asked to consider other characteristics of the module, the respondents also gave high scores to the "informative" and "exciting" values of the exercise, as Table I shows.

TABLE I

Total Responses for All Students Participating in the International Terror Simulation, using a scale of 1 through 7, with 1 highest

Characteristic	Mean Score
"Informative"	2.138
"Exciting"	2.172
"Important"	2.396
"Realistic"	3.02
"Innovative"	2.232
"Complete"	3.587
"Worthwhile"	2.123

N = 58

The organizers had hoped that while the simulation would be self-contained, it would not appear complete in itself to prepare students for the study of conflict. The lower score given by respondents to this trait tends to support the contention that students did see the exercise in this light. Also interesting to note are the responses of those students who had concentrated on the study of international terror within an extended classroom setting (i.e., the pro-seminar in international relations at UN-L) and the one hour mini-course which had a minimum of prior preparation. The close proximity of these respective scores, (as indicated in Table 2, which gives course ratings), tends to support faculty observation that the exercise did meet the objective of being readily adapted to the needs of students in various course structures and content within the intercollegiate project.

In summarizing the evaluations from faculty and students, we can note that the initial objectives of the simulation were met. Indeed, the degree of satisfaction is such that the participation schools are currently preparing

other forms of simulation and gaming activities to be enacted over the next two years. However, the intrinsic value of the simulation itself suggests several generalizations about simulation as a learning experience. In particular, the authors find in this simulation a characteristic which resembles one found in evaluations of other experiential learning approaches such as internships. Specifically, there is a need to provide additional direction to students if they are to identify and apply the learning they acquire in the classroom either in practice or in other classrooms.

TABLE 2

Mean Scores in Student Evaluations of the International Terror Simulation identified on the basis of courses, using a scale of 1 through 7, with 1 highest

Characteristic	Mean Score for Students in Pro-Seminar at UNL (N=11)	Mean Score for Students in Pol. Sci. course at UNL (N=20)	Mean Score for 20th Century History course at UNL (N=10)	Mean Score for Elective Seminar in Terror at Wayne State (N=7)	Mean Score for Mini-course at Kearney State (N=10)
"Informative"	2.182	2.300	2.30	2.00	1.70
"Exciting"	2.363	2.450	2.50	1.714	1.40
"Important	2.363	2.500	2.90	2.439	1.70
"Realistic	2.090	3.200	3.00	3.500	2.70
"Innovative"	2.182	2.400	2.00	2.571	1.89
"Complete"	3.273	3.550	4.30	4.71	3.50
"Worthwhile"	1.909	2.105	2.00	2.428	1.90

(Scores for those in the Journalism course at UN-L are not available at this time.)

It has already been pointed out above that students were generally incapable of converting initial surprise and distraction into an orderly approach for solving the problems in which they were enmeshed. This suggests that certain steps must be taken comparable to those in the literature on student internalization of experience from internships and

other forms of experiential learning. Specifically, in simulation it may point to the need for greater structure and perhaps role assignment with specific advance preparation for the particular role.

In internships students may describe their responsibilities and opportunities solely within a framework of task-related objectives rather than with cognitive challenges and achievements. Similarly, it may be that in simulations in which minimum but sufficient ground rules are given, students may be inclined to retreat into a "classroom" situation in which they wait for further instructions. Earlier opportunities for students to be more active learners may enable them to gain the maximum cognitive growth within simulations, as well as encourage educational growth generally. There is, in our other classroom experiences, a tendency for students in inter national relations to rely upon the expertise of the literature and to downplay their own roles as critics and contributors. If this is to be overcome, more attention must be given to developing the students' criticial competencies. While our evaluations affirmed David Louscher's findings that "simulations are among the rare college experiences that alter students' frame of reference about politics,"[3] we see the need for ensuring greater student awareness of the learning potential inherent in simulations.

Related to this condition is the need to reconsider how practitioners can be used in activating student learning. Because so little use was made by our students of these professionals as participants in the simulations and the practitioners likewise seemed to hold back from working with the students), we suggest that in a replication of our scenario (and possibly in simulations on other subjects), practitioners and students be kept separate until each

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3 IS NOTES, IV (Fall, 1977), 11.

group reaches the limits of its effectiveness, whereupon each might report to the other in an extended debriefing situation. Pre-conceived sterotyping as well as isolation of students and practitioners cannot be easily overcome within a simulation, even when both, as in our exercise, are bound together by the element of surprise. If students had a greater awareness from their international studies of the specific and numerous linkages these local and regional agencies have with global affairs, they might have considered drawing upon the practitioners' expertise. This, of course, points to the desirability of expanding in international studies the material, which stress local-global linkages.

Lastly, we were made aware that the failure of our participants in the negotiating process added an unexpected dividend: the assumption of responsibilities by the students in identifying their own weaknesses in affective and cognitive orientations once the simulation was halted. Repeated requests by these students to participate in a second intercollegiate simulation may add further testimony that much more was learned and internalized <u>after</u> the two day event than was recognized during the course of the scenario. We therefore recommend that the organizers of simulation follow similar initial failure with opportunities for soliciting student evaluations and input over a longer time frame than might be assumed necessary. Likewise we have found that participants approached the literature on terrorism with much more discretion and vocal reaction than was true in the pre-simulation assignments. This leads us to suggest that a simulation with an element of surprise may well be a more useful learning experience for students at the entering level of international relations courses and that this active learning experience at an early stage of college-level instruction may be preferable to classes devoted exclusively to the traditional lecture format.